

Remarks

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10-16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28-35 are pending in the application. Claims 11-14, 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28-31 have been allowed. Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18 and 32-34 have been rejected. Claim 35 is newly added.

Claim rejections

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18 and 32-34 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Dews et al. (US 3,801,374) ("Dews"). The Applicant respectfully traverses. Dews cannot support the asserted rejection for at least the reason that Dews does not disclose "a gas 'supply inlet which is formed as an opening along an edge of the separator bottom into the fluid passage and supplies a gas to the fluid passage therethrough, wherein gas supply inlets of separators of adjacent unit cells of the fuel cell communicate with each other to channel the gas" as recited in claim 1. The noted recitation is supported in the present specification at, for example, page 22, lines 1-6.

It is apparent simply by inspection of the figures therein that Dews does not disclose the claimed structure. In Dews, the tubular fuel inlets 28, 40 are formed in a wall of a plate 18. The inlets 28, 40 are discrete and separated from each other by a portion of the plate 18. The inlets cannot communicate with each other to channel a fuel gas. Claim 1 is therefore allowable over Dews. Moreover, since each of claims 3 - 5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16 and 18 is directly or indirectly dependent on claim 1 and therefore includes its recitations, these claims are likewise allowable over Dews for at least the reasons discussed in connection with claim 1.

Claim 32 is allowable for at least the reason that it depends on allowed claim 11.

Claim 33 is allowable over Dews for at least the reason that Dews does not disclose "a number of projections arranged in each of the regions successively decreases across at least three regions" as recited in claim 33. The noted recitation is supported, for example, by FIG. 11 of the present application.

Fig. 2 of Dews et al. shows that a width of the third region (passage) is narrower than the width of the second region (passage), and the width of the second region is larger than the width of the first region. Thus, the width of each of the plurality of

regions does not successively decrease from upstream to downstream across all regions on the separator. According to such structure shown in Fig. 2, because a sectional area of the second passage is larger than a sectional area of the first passage, a flow speed of the gas flowing through the second passage becomes slower, thereby the diffusibility of the gas decreases. On the other hand, according to the present invention, because the width of each of the plurality of regions successively decreases from upstream to downstream across all regions on the separator, it can restrict the flow speed of the gas from decreasing, and as a result of that, the diffusibility of the gas can be improved.

Claim 34 is likewise allowable over Dews for at least the reason that it depends on claim 34.

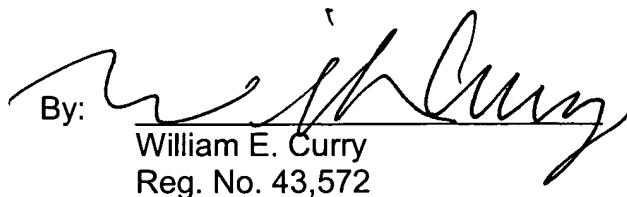
In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18 and 32-34 as being anticipated by Dews is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4323 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: September 14, 2005

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